

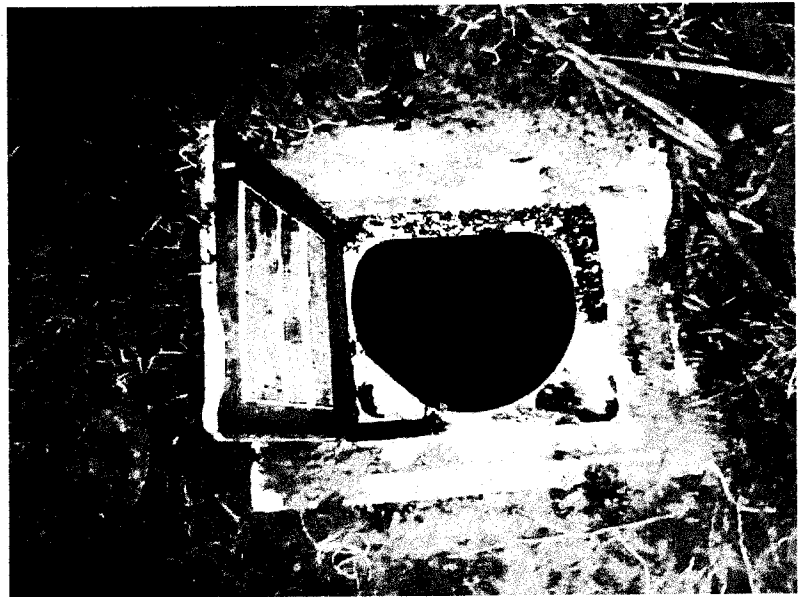
**"Eliminating Failing and Obsolete Septic Systems in Sanders County, Montana"**

Honorable Chairman and committee members, thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning about Sanders County's Grant Application. My name is Barbara Woodbury, and I am the sanitarian for Sanders County.

- **The Problem:** Sanders County did not permit septic systems until 1995. Often times "creative materials" were used. (Please see the attached photos†) Failure includes collapsing metal tanks or cesspools, sewage backing up in homes or onto the ground, or no system at all discharging raw sewage to the environment.
  - 1 in 5 septic permits for 2006 were for replacement of failed or obsolete septic systems
  - 80 % of homes were built before permits (~4,000 homes)
  - 17% of the population below the poverty level
- **A solution:** "Get Your Poop in a Group" program
  - Monthly newspaper columns
  - Working with installers and site evaluators
    - Education and communication
  - Public out reach
    - The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) will be a tool to enhance public cooperation to replace obsolete septic systems
- **How RLF will work:**
  - Sanders County Community Development Council administration
  - Simple application process, low interest rates
  - Payments with taxes or when home is sold
  - Flexible pay back options assist people on limited, fixed incomes
  - Allows homeowners to be proactive BEFORE catastrophe strikes and the system is totally inoperable.

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† Photos by Rick Sorlie, a licensed Sanders County septic system installer



This washing machine is part of one obsolete septic system in Thompson Falls, MT. The effluent from this "system" went to a rock lined cesspool. I lifted up a rock to inspect the sewage filled cesspool. Toddlers lived in one of the homes. Both homes had sewage backing up into the home when these obsolete septic systems failed.